



STEAM exhibition

Curated by BeiBei Song and Lisa Sibilia

Artists

Trevor Paglen, The Kronos Quartet and Obscura Digital

Name of Exhibit	About the Artists
Sight Machine	<p>Trevor Paglen is an American artist, geographer, and author whose work tackles mass surveillance and data collection.</p> <p>For 45 years, San Francisco's Kronos Quartet – David Harrington (violin), John Sherba (violin), Hank Dutt (viola), and Sunny Yang (cello) – has pursued a singular artistic vision, combining a spirit of fearless exploration with a commitment to continually reimagine the string quartet experience. In the process, Kronos has become one of the most celebrated and influential groups of our time, performing thousands of concerts worldwide, releasing more than 60 recordings of extraordinary breadth and creativity, collaborating with many of the world's most accomplished composers and performers, and commissioning more than 1,000 works and arrangements for string quartet. Kronos has received over 40 awards, including both the Polar Music and Avery Fisher Prize, two of the most prestigious awards given to musicians. In 2018, the group became the first US-based musicians to receive the WOMEX (World Music Expo) Artist Award.</p> <p>Obscura Digital is a creative studio located in historic Pier 70 in the Dogpatch District of San Francisco, California. Combining innovative technology with creative expression, Obscura designs and develops immersive, interactive digital art installations and experiences around the world.</p>

About the Performance

“Artist Trevor Paglen and the ever-inventive Kronos Quartet present Sight Machine, a multimedia performance putting a string quartet under the gaze of machine-vision and artificial intelligence. We live in a data-driven world, but is it really possible to quantify human emotion? This concert puts that question under surveillance. While the Kronos Quartet perform works by Terry Riley, Laurie Anderson, Steve Reich, Egyptian electronic musician Islam Chippy and others, the musicians are monitored by cameras feeding into a suite of artificial intelligence algorithms. The software turns this abstracted information back into images, which are then projected onto the screen behind the performers, showing us how machines and their algorithms perceive what we are seeing. Utilising algorithms ranging from consumer-grade facial detection to advanced surveillance systems and even guided missiles, Sight Machine is a fascinating and unsettling illustration of the discrepancy between what we experience as human beings and what machines ‘see’.” - Barbican website